

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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VALLETTA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PBOR, SO, ET
SUBJ: CONTINUED RELUCTANCE TO DEFINE TERMS OF A NEGOTIATED
SETTLEMENT

REF: MOGADISCIO 0113

SUMMARY: IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS, A GSDR MINISTER AND PRESIDENT SIAD HIMSELF HAVE SHOWN NO MORE DISPOSITION TO DEFINE ACCEPTABLE TERMS FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT THAN WAS APPARENT TWO WEEKS AGO.

1. DURING A COURTESY CALL ON JAN. 30 TO INTRODUCE AID MISSION DIRECTOR CAMPBELL TO MINERALS MINISTER HUSSEIN ABDULKADIR KASSIM, THE CHARGE ASKED ABOUT THE DEMANDS IMPOSED ON THE MINISTER WHILE WEARING HIS DIPLOMATIC HAT. (THE MINISTER IS REGULARLY EMPLOYED AS A SPECIAL EMMISSARY BY PRESIDENT SIAD.)
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KASSIM WAS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED TO DISCUSS THIS ASPECT OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES. HE SAID THAT SIAD'S TRIP TO THE THREE ARAB CAPITALS, AMMAN, SANA, AND JIDDA WAS VERY USEFUL. HE SAID THE SOMALI LEADER'S EXPLANATION OF THE CONFLICT IN THE HORN WAS UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED, ADDING THAT THE GSDR EXPECTED FIRM SUPPORT FROM THESE BROTHER ARAB NATIONS.

2. WHEN THE CHARGE ATTEMPTED TO GUIDE THE DISCUSSION INTO AN EXAMINATION OF THE SHAPE OF A POSSIBLE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE OGADEN CONFLICT, KASSIM RESPONDED ALONG FAMILIAR LINES, ASSERTING THAT THERE COULD BE NO RETURN TO EVEN A NOMINAL ETHIOPIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE OGADEN UNLESS CONFIRMED BY PLEBESCIATE. HE SAID HE COULD SEE THE POSSIBILITY OF THIRD NATION PEACE KEEPING FORCES, BUT HE ASKED WHERE WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT (WSLF) FORCES THEMSELVES COULD WITHDRAW IN THE EVENT OF AN AGREED DISENGAGEMENT, ADDING THAT THEY INHABIT THE AREA; THEY CANNOT GO ANYWHERE ELSE SAVE AS REFUGEES. HE SAID THAT SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF, HE COULD NOT ENVISAGE ANY SETTLEMENT THAT DID NOT RECOGNIZE SELF-DETERMINATION. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE HIMSELF WAS AN OGENDENI,
HE GREW UP THERE, AND LATER WENT TO ETHIOPIAN SCHOOLS, AND KNOWS AND SPEAKS AMHARIC. HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE ANYTHING LESS THAN A COMPLETE DECIMATION OF SOMALIS IN THE OGADEN WERE THE ETHIOPIANS ALLOWED BACK IN WITH POLICE POWERS.
HE THOUGHT OGADENIS WOULD PREFER TO DIE FIGHTING. MOREOVER, HE SAID, WERE THE ETHIOPIANS ALLOWED TO REOCCUPY THE OGADEN, THE GSDR COULD BE OVERWHELMED WITH AS MANY AS TWO MILLION REFUGEES, A PROBLEM THE GSDR SIMPLY COULD NOT HANDLE. NO SOMALI GOVERNMENT COULD DO THAT, NOR COULD ANY SOMALI GOVT ORDER THE WSLF TO RETREAT, THE MINISTER CONTINUED. HE SAID AN AUTONOMOUS OGADEN UNDER ETHIOPIAN SOVEREIGNTY HAD BEEN URGED ON THE GSDR BY THE SOVIETS AND FIDEL NASTRO LAST SPRING AND SUMMER,
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AND ULTIMATELY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPLIT WITH THE USSR. THE MINISTER FINALLY CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY ORGANIZED DISCUSSION WITHIN THE GSDR ON THE POSSIBLE SHAPE OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

3. IN A SECOND CONVERSATION ON JAN. 30, FRENCH AMBASSADOR CLAUDE MANTEL REPORTED HE HAD PRESENTED HIS GOVERNMENT'S NEGATIVE ANSWER TO PRESIDENT SIAD'S JAN. 16 BID TO THE WESTERN POWERS FOR ARMED ASSISTANCE. MANTEL URGED A COURSE OF NEGOTIATION ON PRESIDENT SIAD. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR SAID IT WAS A DIFFICULT MEETING WITH THE SOMALI LEADER UNRECEPTIVE TO THE SUGGESTION MANTEL ADVANCED.

4. IN PUBLIC REMARKS YESTERDAY, JAN. 30, THE SOMALI PRESIDENT ASSERTED THAT THE WESTERN COUNTRIES MUST NOT BE INDIFFERENT TO THE HORN OF AFRICA CONFLICT WHICH IS WORSENING DAY BY DAY. SIAD ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO OFFER ALL ASSISTANCE IN RESOLVING THE CONFLICT PEACEFULLY AND JUSTLY.

5. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY SEES NO MORE PROGRESS ON THE SOMALI SIDE IN DEFINING THE TERMS OF NEGOTIATED SETTLE-

MENT THAN WAS APPARENT TWO WEEKS AGO. IN FACT, THERE
SEEMS TO BE A RELUCTANCE TO ADDRESS THE TOPIC. SIAD'S
GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE CONCLUDED IT CANNOT BE A PARTY TO
A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ON ANYTHING BUT ITS OWN TERMS,
WHICH BY DEFINITION ARE UNACCEPTABLE TO ETHIOPIA. IT
MMAY TAKE A SHARP MILITARY REVERSAL TO MODIFY THAT CONCLUSION.
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